

Illuminating the Legacy of Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Al-Biruni: Exploring Political and Legal Philosophies in Transoxiana

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ABSTRACT

This article delves into the intricate political, social, and economic transformations witnessed in Transoxiana and Khorasan between the 9th and 12th centuries, which paved the way for the advancement of political and legal ideologies in the region. The establishment of the renowned “Bayt al-Hikmah” in Baghdad during the 9th century, dubbed as the Eastern Academy of Sciences, marked a significant milestone. The emergence of the Samanid state, the ascendancy of Khorezm, and the ensuing stability and prosperity fostered a flourishing cultural landscape, nurturing the growth of luminaries in world science like Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Al-Biruni, Al-Khwarizmi, and others. The article scrutinizes the philosophical works of these scholars, principally focusing on their perspectives on politics and law, with emphasis on themes of superstition and humanitarianism. The exploration delves into their insights on societal origins, state functions and obligations, and the developmental trajectory of legal frameworks, shedding light on the evolution of thought in medieval Islamic scholarship.

Keywords: Secular sciences; Renaissance; Jurisprudence; Education; Justice; Doctrine; A Virtuous City; Administrators; Craftsmen; Politicians.

1. Introduction

Abul Abbas Ma'mun was a highly knowledgeable and enlightened ruler who supported scientists and poets during his reign [1]. Alongside Ibn Sina and Al-Biruni, esteemed intellectuals of that era, scholars like Abu Sahl Mashihi, Abu Nasr ibn Iraq, Abul Khair ibn Hammar, and Abu Abdullah al-Khorazmi congregated in the palace of the Khorezmshahs [2].

The “House of Scholars” was founded under the patronage of Khorezmshah Ma'mun. During this era, both religious and secular sciences flourished, marking it as the period of the Eastern Renaissance [3]. The contributions of Musa Khorezmi, Al-Farabi, Al-Ferghani, Al-Biruni, and Ibn Sina to world science were significant, particularly in the advancement of social sciences and the development of fikh-Islamic jurisprudence, which deserve special recognition.

2. Method of Research

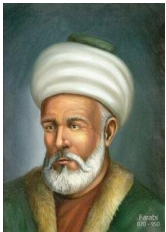
1. Literature Review: It is conducted a comprehensive review of existing literature on Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Al-Biruni, political philosophy, legal philosophy, and the historical context of Transoxiana and Khorasan. This helped establish the background and context for the study.

2. Historical Analysis: Helped to examine the political and legal philosophies of Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Al-Biruni within the historical context of Transoxiana and Khorasan. This involved studying primary sources, historical events, and intellectual developments in the region.

3. Philosophical Examination: a philosophical examination of the ideas and theories put forth by Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Al-Biruni related to politics and law. This involved analyzing their works, comparing their views, and assessing their contributions to the field.

By following this methodical approach, enhanced understanding of the article and gain valuable insights into the political and legal philosophies of Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Al-Biruni in the historical context of Transoxiana and Khorasan.

3. Discussion and Results



Abu Nasr Farabi (870–950), with his profound grasp of Greek philosophy and extensive commentaries on the subject, earned the titles “Al-Muallim As-Sani” and “Second Teacher” (following Aristotle), as well as being dubbed the “Aristotle of the East.” His exceptional knowledge of contemporary sciences and significant contributions to their advancement further solidified his reputation and garnered him these prestigious titles.

Farabi’s worldview encompasses significant socio-political and moral considerations [4]. His works such as “On the Attainment of Happiness”, “Opinions of the Virtuous City Residents”, “Treatise on the Ways to Attainment of Happiness”, “The Big Book on Music” and “Civil Policy” delve into society and its governance. In his writings on ethics, etiquette, and education, Farabi places a central focus on the human condition.

The profound philosopher’s perspectives on social-political, moral, pedagogical, and aesthetic matters are infused with a humanistic essence. When examining topics like the relationship between society and individuals, humaneness, justice, ideal communities, exemplary individuals, and the pursuit of happiness, he applies theoretical-philosophical, rationalistic, humanistic, and universal standards to his social, moral, and humanistic outlooks [5].

Farabi stands out for being the pioneering philosopher from the Near and Middle East regions to formulate the doctrine regarding the origin of society, its objectives, and responsibilities. Farabi contends that during the Middle Ages, society naturally came into existence, emphasizing that individuals cannot overcome life’s challenges solely through their own efforts but must rely on the support of others [6].

According to Farabi, every individual is inherently designed to require numerous essentials for sustenance and to achieve significant personal growth. He asserts that these necessities cannot be attained in isolation; a collective effort involving a group of individuals is essential to acquire and maintain these essential elements. The collective endeavors of the community’s members collectively furnish each individual with the essential resources required for sustenance and personal development [7]. Consequently, due to this mutual support system, human populations expanded and established settlements in various inhabited regions across the Earth”. Farabi asserts that cities represent the most advanced level of human aggregation, providing the essential environment for individual growth and development. He highlights that communities have arisen naturally due to the inherent needs of individuals [8].

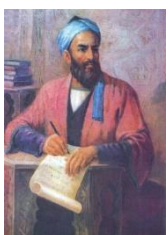
Farabi, known as a prominent humanist and humanitarian philosopher, strongly criticizes societies that degrade human dignity and thrive on the subjugation of other nations. He advocates for peaceful coexistence and collaborative interactions among people, promoting a humane and compassionate approach to life. The philosopher emphasizes that humanity serves as the fundamental bond that brings people together, underscoring the importance of peaceful coexistence among individuals as they are interconnected through their shared humanity.

Farabi's significant concept focuses on the impact of the geographical environment on societal progress. He posits that the specific region in which people reside influences their way of life, traditions, ethics, and conduct, ultimately fostering unity within the community. Within his vision of an ideal society, Farabi classifies individuals into distinct groups based on various criteria. When categorizing individuals, Farabi considers factors such as intellectual capacity, knowledge, and enthusiasm for science, rather than focusing on their religious beliefs or ethnicity. He advocates for the notion that religion should be a tool for human advancement and enlightenment. Farabi's perspective is characterized by a lack of religious bias and a commitment to religious freedom. While he holds great reverence for Islam and the Quran, viewing them as guides for moral conduct, he criticizes religious figures who exploit religion for personal gain and perpetuate ignorance [9].

Farabi categorizes city-states into two distinct types: virtuous and ignorant. In a virtuous city, the primary goal is to ensure the happiness of its citizens, with a leader who embodies fairness, high moral standards, enlightenment, and other positive attributes. On the other hand, Farabi identifies cities or nations where the population is consumed by greed and solely focused on amassing wealth as ignorant cities. According to the scholar, even the rulers of ignorant cities are solely motivated by the pursuit of wealth. These leaders view their position as a means to amass material riches, leading to a culture of greed within the city [10]. Consequently, under the governance of such leaders, the population is plagued by various vices including immoral behavior, excessive desires, intolerance, theft, animosity, and conflicts. Farabi asserts that a virtuous city is one that actively pursues genuine happiness by fostering cooperation and unity among its inhabitants. Individuals who come together to support one another in the pursuit of happiness contribute to the creation of a virtuous community.

Farabi emphasizes that a leader governing the state must exhibit specific virtues and characteristics, particularly possessing six essential qualities. The leader of such a state should be just, wise, compassionate towards others, law-abiding, capable of enacting laws, and possess the ability to anticipate future challenges. In Farabi's view, a virtuous city will be characterized by high levels of civilization. The residents within such a city will have the freedom to pursue their desired professions, fostering a society that values freedom and equality.

Farabi's philosophical ideas have spread extensively, not only in Eastern countries but also in Europe, influencing the development of socio-philosophical thought significantly. The thinker's humanistic and moral concepts continue to benefit humanity by guiding individuals towards happiness, fostering global peace, nurturing the next generation into mature and virtuous individuals, and promoting the pursuit of knowledge and enlightenment.



Abu Raykhan Biruni (973–1048) is widely regarded as one of the most prominent figures in the history of world science [11], having made substantial contributions to various fields of knowledge and humanistic ideas. His influence is acknowledged by numerous scholars from both Eastern and Western regions. The increasing fascination with Beruni's scientific legacy can be attributed, in part, to his profound humanistic inclinations.

In his works such as "India", "Geodesy", "Mineralogy", and "Monuments left by ancient peoples", Abu Rayhan Beruni advocated for the importance of upholding social justice and the rule of law in society. Beruni's vision of governance favored enlightened kings leading the country rather than absolute rulers [12]. He believed that for a

state to thrive, it must adhere to principles such as mutual assistance, peaceful coexistence, and universal well-being. Beruni emphasized the significance of peaceful coexistence among nations, viewing it as essential for the happiness and prosperity of the people.

Abu Rayhan Beruni believed that the primary purpose of the state and laws should be to promote human happiness, advocating for governance by an enlightened king. He posited that the level of humanity in a society is gauged by how well people's daily necessities are fulfilled. Beruni emphasized that the cornerstone of citizens' well-being lies in upholding the principles of social justice and ensuring fairness in society.



Abu Ali ibn Sina (970–1037) is renowned as the preeminent encyclopedist of the golden age of Islamic culture [13]. He skillfully integrated various strands of ancient and Islamic scientific thought traditions in his socio-political and legal perspectives. Ibn Sina made significant contributions to the foundational principles of family, societal, and state governance through his meticulous legal analyses. His political and legal perspectives had a profound impact on the spiritual landscape of the Islamic world and transcended into Latin translations from the 12th century onwards. They played a pivotal role in shaping the worldview of philosophers and intellectuals during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance [14].

The thinker's renowned work "Canon of Medicine" served as the primary medical guide and textbook in European universities until the 17th century. He is not only a physician but also a philosopher, delving into various aspects of knowledge. His legal and political perspectives are extensively explored in works such as "ash-Shifa fi al-ilahiyat", "Fi Aqşam al-ulūm al-aqliya" and chapters 2, 4, and 5 of the 10 articles in "Kitab ash-shifa". Additionally, his profound insights on governance are meticulously examined in the works of "Kitab al-Siyasah". In particular, Ibn Sina's work "Ash-Shifa fi al-ilahiyat" articulates his profound perspectives on human rights, freedoms, and their safeguarding by the state. He expounds on the crucial role of social justice and equitable state governance within this notable work:

First, he delved into the intricate relationship between the state and law, emphasizing the significance of religion and the prophet in shaping a legal society;

Second, he regarded the prophet as a key figure who imparts divine and traditional laws to both the nation and the city, embodying the essence of a lawmaker;

Third, he structured the community residing in the city into three distinct hierarchical groups: administrators, artisans, and military personnel [15].

When analyzing Ibn Sina's legal perspectives, the philosopher links the establishment of the state with the societal division, highlighting its composition of three essential components. The primary objective of the lawmaker in formulating laws and governing the nation is intricately tied to the necessity of categorizing society into three distinct groups: 1) administrators, 2) craftsmen, and 3) military personnel. make sentences according to following information: It was emphasized that the legislator should appoint a leader at the top of each group, and other leaders should be appointed for those below him, and it should continue until it comes to general management of people.

The philosopher proposes that to uphold stability and harmony within the state, all aspects should be governed by law, with individuals overseeing three key societal components [16]. Firstly, based on the thinker's framework of power, these individuals encompass the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, charged with governing the state through rule-making. Secondly, the philosopher characterizes entrepreneurs and businessmen as the strategists, coordinators, and executors of economic activities within the nation. Finally, the thinker interprets state guards, military personnel, and politicians as entities tasked with safeguarding state security and ensuring its protection.

Ibn Sina divides the role of the state in society and management into three aspects, namely:

(1) Existence of law in the state; (2) Creation of vacancies in the state; and (3) Social protection of citizens [17].

While discussing the legal aspects of banning unemployment in society, Ibn Sina focused on the following three aspects:

First, every member of society has a responsibility to contribute to or benefit their city and community. Contributing to the state is one of the obligations of society. Therefore, in order to benefit the state, it is described that the members of society should perform the work assigned to them perfectly, conscientiously, and seriously with maximum care and skill.

Second, the government states that it is responsible for ending idleness and unemployment in the city by providing people with jobs and implementing laws that prohibit unemployment. According to the government, the universe was created perfectly by God, and all resources are available for mankind to find sustenance in it. God naturally has a purpose for every work. The universe and its parts are perfectly created, with no room for imperfection or emptiness. If people on earth really tried to meet their daily needs, they would be busy. Therefore, the state, as the representative of God, should provide its citizens with appropriate work that benefits the individual and society, giving them the freedom of choice [18]. It should also prohibit or cancel work that harms the individual and society as a whole. Also, the state should support the development of production skills and skills that are beneficial to society. However, it should also prohibit harmful activities such as adultery and excessive entertainment. The Qur'an provides guidance on the types of occupations and professions that are permissible for people to engage in to earn a living and sustain themselves in this world [19].

Third, Ibn Sina recognized that it is the government's social responsibility to take care of the incapacitated, sick, or disabled. In this case, the government considers it responsible for placing them in a special place and providing training and vocational training until they are able to provide for themselves.

Ibn Sina showed that the state should implement the following policy in order to provide employment to its citizens:

- ensuring that citizens engage in useful and remunerated work when they are able to work and healthy;
- establishment of a training system for effective work;
- guaranteeing the use of free and effective medical services during illness;
- providing the basic needs of a citizen with a disability due to circumstances beyond the control of individuals, such as illness, widowhood, unemployment, as well as old age and minors [20].

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the era spanning the 9th to 12th centuries in Movarounnahr stands out as a golden age characterized by remarkable scientific progress, a vibrant cultural scene, and profound Islamic philosophical insights. The luminaries of this period, including Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Al-Biruni, emerged as beacons of intellectual prowess, leaving an indelible mark on global culture through their groundbreaking scientific inquiries and philosophical musings. Their enduring legacies serve as a testament to the enduring influence of this transformative era, where knowledge and ideas flourished, shaping the intellectual landscape for generations to come. The contributions of these esteemed scholars continue to inspire and enrich scholarly discourse, underscoring the enduring relevance of their works in contemporary discussions on science, philosophy, and culture. As we reflect on the accomplishments of these visionaries, we are reminded of the lasting impact of Movarounnahr's golden age on the trajectory of human knowledge and the enduring quest for understanding in a rapidly evolving world.

Considering the remarkable achievements of Movarounnahr's golden age, it is essential to look towards the future and consider how we can build upon this rich intellectual heritage. Here are 4-5 future suggestions to carry forward the spirit of inquiry and innovation:

Promoting Interdisciplinary Research: Encourage interdisciplinary collaborations among scholars to bridge the gaps between different fields of study and cultivate a more holistic understanding of complex issues.

Investing in Education and Research: Allocate resources to support education and research institutions dedicated to exploring the intersections of science, philosophy, and culture, fostering a new generation of thinkers and innovators.

Embracing Diversity and Inclusivity: Emphasize the importance of diversity and inclusivity in academic environments to ensure a wide range of perspectives are represented, fostering a more enriched and comprehensive discourse.

Leveraging Technological Advancements: Embrace emerging technologies to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge and enhance research capabilities, opening up new avenues for exploration and discovery.

Fostering Global Collaboration: Promote international partnerships and exchanges to encourage the sharing of ideas and expertise across borders, creating a more interconnected and vibrant scholarly community.

Declarations

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Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare no competing financial, professional, or personal interests.

Consent for publication

The authors declare that they consented to the publication of this study.

Authors' contributions

Both the authors took part in literature review, analysis and manuscript writing equally.

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